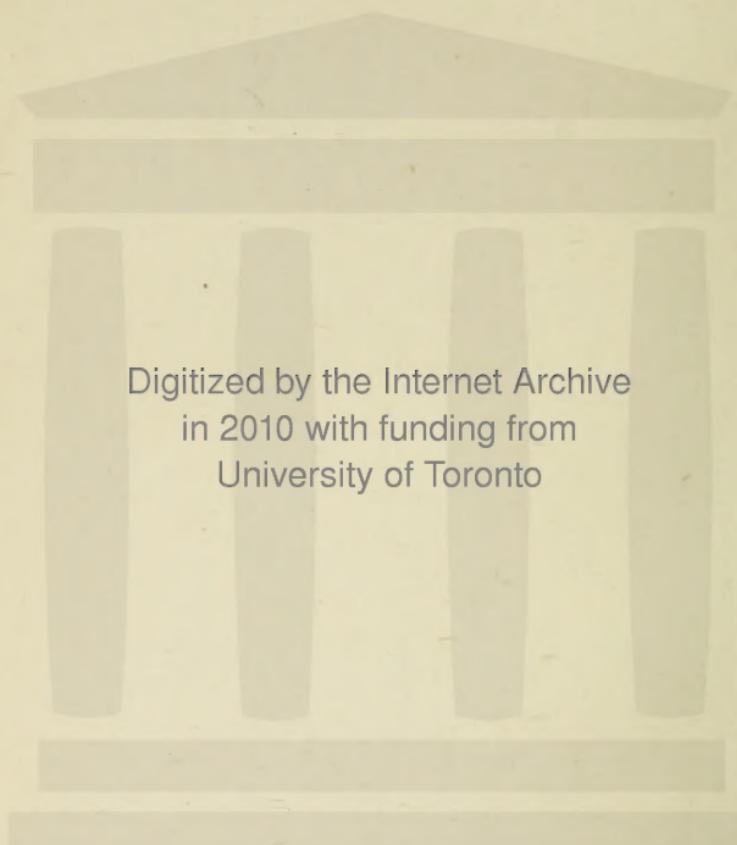




THE TRAINING
OF CHILDREN

MRS H. C. CRADOCK



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THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN
FROM CRADLE TO SCHOOL



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O CHILD! O new born citizen
Of life's great city! on thy head
The glory of the morn is shed,
Like a celestial benison!
Here at the portal thou dost stand
And with thy little hand
Thou openest the mysterious gate
Into the future's undiscovered land.

LONGFELLOW.

Education

THE
TRAINING OF CHILDREN
FROM CRADLE TO SCHOOL
A GUIDE FOR YOUNG MOTHERS
TEACHERS AND
NURSES

BY

MRS. H. C. CRADOCK



LONDON
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PREFACE

IN these days when the early training of children is engaging the attention of so many thoughtful people, and when so many books on the subject are to be had, it seems perhaps a work of supererogation to add yet another. But the fact remains, that many young mothers, as well as girls who are trying to prepare themselves for the work of a nursery governess or mother's help, are unable to find a book on the subject which shall give them advice, based on a sound psychological and physiological basis, but which is neither too "learned" nor too long.

To tell such girls that a knowledge of psychology and physiology and of many other things is needed, if they are to be successful trainers of the young, is simply to frighten them; they make up their minds that such subjects are beyond them, and that they must get on as best they can with the help of their mother-wit.

What does seem to be wanted is a short book which shall give in a concise form some guidance as to the laws of health, the powers of a child, and how best to train his faculties.

The writer has spent many years of her life in teaching young children between the ages of three and eight. She has, in addition, had the far more valuable experience of what we may call first-hand knowledge—that is, she has had a child of her own to bring up.

She owes her thanks to so many kind friends who have given advice, and to the Authors of so many books that it is impossible to thank them all individually. But an exception must be made in the case of Dr. Louis Robinson, of Streatham Hill, S.W., who has most generously and patiently been always ready to answer any questions concerning health matters.

She sends this little book forth with the earnest hope that it may be of some use to those young mothers and teachers who have undertaken, or shall undertake that difficult but most blessed and hopeful work, the training of a little child.

It may perhaps be well to add that the

chapters on Moral and Religious Training may contain a good deal with which some parents and teachers cannot agree. There is no doubt that the teaching of quite young children is undergoing a complete revolution. This is only what might be expected, when we remember that the study of child-nature is of comparatively recent origin. Psychology is teaching us much, and we cannot and ought not to shut our eyes to any truth which it may disclose to us. The Writer has consulted, as far as possible, those clergymen, parents and teachers whom she thought most capable of giving sound advice on the subject.

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THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN

CHAPTER I

THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY TRAINING

THE place of woman in the world and her work in life has long been a subject of deep interest to all who care for the welfare of the race. There are those who say that she is in all respects the equal of man, and that it is only the want of education and opportunity in the past, which has kept her from her rightful place at his side—as his equal.

On the other hand, there are those who say that she has always been his superior in some things, and his inferior in others; that the two were never meant to be alike, but that the one was to supply what the other lacked.

Whatever view we may hold as to the relative position of the sexes, all are agreed that for one sort of work women are naturally more fitted than men. That work is the training of young children. A woman's special gifts—her quickness of perception, her sympathy, her patience—are peculiarly needed for this most delicate of tasks. If what scientific men tell us is true, that the first few years of life are the most important in the formation of character,

then surely there can be no work on earth so fraught with momentous consequences as the training of a little child. He who said "Give me a child for the first seven years of his life, and I don't care who has him afterwards," knew what he was talking about. In these early days the young life is as clay in our hands to mould almost as we will. Habits can be formed now without much effort, which can only be acquired with great care and hard work later on. Then, too, it is the early impressions which are the lasting ones. So if it is true that what a man *is*, is of more importance than what he *does*, that is to say, if his character is the thing that really matters, then we can see how important the training of that character is.

Even in these days, when the study of childhood is so much to the fore, we need to emphasize this truth, so that we may for ever get rid of the idea that "any-one can look after a child."

Many women, who are not well enough educated to take up teaching as a career, or not strong enough for hospital nursing, think that, at any rate, they are fitted for the work of a nursery governess. Fortunately, there are many good women who, without any special training, seem to be "born" to the work; they have naturally the gifts which are needed for it; but, on the other hand, how many there are who are totally unfitted for the task. It is impossible for all who are to have the charge of a nursery to go in for special training. We cannot all be Norland Nurses, nor can we all go through a kindergarten course of training;

but we can all try to prepare ourselves in some measure for the work. We can learn of those who have made a special study of child nature; we can read simple books on the principles of kindergarten work; and we can learn something of the laws of health.

Many girls who take up the work of a nursery governess, and many young mothers too, would be only too thankful for a little guidance and advice, if they knew where to find them. It is a mistake to suppose that all mothers know what is good for their children simply because they *are* mothers. The best ones tell us how many mistakes they might have avoided if they had known a little more of child nature beforehand. Only the other day a young mother said, with reference to some advice which had been given her concerning her only child "If *only* I had known this before!" Experience teaches much, but if, before we have the opportunity of learning its lessons, we try to fit ourselves in every possible way for the work of training a child, then, at any rate, we shall have the comfort of feeling that we have done our best.

There is surely no nobler or higher work for woman than this. To do it well requires some of the finest gifts of nature, or, shall we say, of grace. It is indeed a religious work, and one not to be undertaken lightly. We are sure that He who "took little children up in His arms, laid His hands upon them, and blessed them" will approve of any efforts that we make for their good. We are sure of His encouragement and guidance if we seek them. And we *shall* need them, for though the work is a happy and a blessed one, we

must not shut our eyes to the fact that it is also exacting and tiring. However great our love for little children is, there will come days when everything seems to go wrong, days when little nerves are easily upset, when quarrels are frequent, and ill-temper rife, days when we feel physically unable to cope with the restlessness and noise which are inherent in lively and healthy children. At such times we shall need all the help and encouragement we can get. It is well for us to be forewarned about this, or we shall easily be disillusioned and disheartened, and think that "there never were such naughty children as these."

Perhaps this little book, written by one who is a mother, and who has come into close contact with many young children besides her own, may be some help to those who have not time or opportunity for special training, or for reading longer and more elaborate works on education.

CHAPTER II

THE IDEAL MOTHER OR TEACHER

A LADY who had been trained as a children's nurse, and who was very successful in her work, once said: "One needs to be *perfect* to be a good nurse—perfect in physical health, as well as in moral qualities." She was not implying that *she* was perfect, indeed she was feeling the responsibility of her work heavily, and the difficulty of being always equal to the task. But she loved her work, because she loved her children, and here perhaps we come at once to the secret of her success. A woman who has not real love for children will never be successful in training them. Love is the supreme qualification. Without it, the other virtues, which we must speak of later, are as nothing. Happily, even in the case of those women who are not naturally fond of children, love generally comes with the little first-born baby. Its helplessness, the constant demands it makes on us, call us to make sacrifices on its behalf; and it is a fact that if we want to learn love for any human being, man or child, we learn it by doing kindnesses. It is what we give, not what we receive, that makes love grow. Love alone can keep us from growing weary when the endless little details of nursery life call for constant service and self-restraint.

Perhaps next to love comes understanding of child-

nature. I read lately in a book written by one who loves children, that this gift of understanding is a thing which some people have by nature and some have not, and that it cannot be acquired. This is surely rather a hopeless doctrine, but there is a certain amount of truth in it. Do we not all know the people who instinctively get into touch with children at once? They possess something which others lack. It is hard to define exactly what it is. Amongst other things, it includes the power of putting one's self into the child's place, of seeing things as the child sees them. One must be able literally to enjoy the things the child enjoys. The games must be entered into heartily, and with real pleasure, not as if we were playing to amuse the children. The sorrows must be *felt*. There must be no "talking down" to our young playfellows. They must be taken seriously.

Those who have not this gift of understanding, which greatly lightens the burden of training, can yet acquire it to some extent, as has been proved over and over again. They may learn much by being often in the presence of children, by watching them observantly, by noticing, for instance, when the attention flags in a story and *why* it flags, by watching a good schoolmistress at work with a class, and trying to discover wherein lies the secret of her success. Some people seem able to remember much better than others the days of their own childhood; they can recall vividly the fears they experienced, and the likes and dislikes they felt for certain people. This, too, is a help.

Yet another qualification which the successful nurse must possess is that of patience. There is perhaps hardly any virtue more constantly needed in the nursery. Over and over again, in the course of the day, little things will occur which need the exercise of this virtue. Curious little minds will need endless questions answered; clumsy little fingers will upset neat arrangements; restless little limbs will be always on the go. But the patience of the mother must never fail. Whatever doubts there may be on other questions connected with the bringing up of a child, there can be no doubt at all that impatience and irritability are always harmful; they can do no possible good. Those people who are born with naturally placid and even tempers have a great advantage to begin with, when dealing with children; but patience, like understanding, can be cultivated, and an added strength of character comes to those, who, naturally impatient, learn by self-restraint and constant practice to check the impatient word and look.

Last on our list of qualifications, though in some ways it ought to come first, we will place good bodily health. If we are to be much with little children, we do indeed need to be strong and healthy in every respect. Their restlessness, and the noise which accompanies their physical well-being, make great demands on our nerves and strength. Those who have to look after them must see to it that, as far as possible, they get a proper amount of sleep, exercise, fresh air and good food. We are learning more and more, in these days, that our bodily health is in

our own keeping to a much larger extent than we formerly thought was the case; self-discipline has a good deal to do with it.

We have now mentioned four qualifications, which we might almost say are indispensable for one who is to manage a nursery. There are several lesser but still important points, which it may be well to mention. The ideal mother must possess a clear soft voice; her enunciation must be pure and distinct. She must be neatly and prettily dressed. Her manners must be gracious and gentle. Her movements must be quiet. She must have skill in telling stories. She must be orderly and neat in her ways, punctual in her arrangements. She must be a person of tact, able to distinguish large things from small—the things which really matter, from those which are non-essential.

Lastly, she must have a sense of humour. This will carry her through many a difficulty, and help to make many rough places smooth.

As we consider this long list of perfections, which the ideal mother must possess, we feel inclined to say: "Who is sufficient for these things?" There is but one answer, I think, which we can give to this question—"My grace is sufficient for thee." It is an old answer, but it is Divine. We may comfort ourselves with the assurance that this grace may be ours, if we faithfully do our part.

CHAPTER III

THE NURSERY

LET us imagine that we are able to choose which room in the house we like best for our nursery. We will have one facing South or West, so as to get as much sunlight as possible. It is nice to have windows facing a cheerful and beautiful prospect; but if we must choose between the view and the sunshine, we will choose the sunshine, for it is almost, if not quite as necessary to the growth and well-being of children as it is to plants. For the same reason we will avoid a room with trees close to the window, for they, besides keeping this same sunshine from us, also keep away the air. We will choose large and lofty rooms for both day and night nursery, for we shall need plenty of space for games by day, and plenty of fresh air by day and night. We will have a good-sized window or two windows in each room, and dark green blinds. These dark blinds serve a double purpose. We have said just now that sunlight is necessary, but there are times when its brightness is better hidden. The room should be darkened for the mid-day rest; sleep is more refreshing and of more value to the brain and body when we are in the dark. Curtains may well be dispensed with in nurseries as they harbour dust; but if they are desired, short ones, that can be easily washed may

be used. We will heat our rooms by an open fire, which must be protected by a fender-guard at least four feet high. We will try to keep the rooms at a temperature of about 60°; for this we shall need a thermometer. We will not hang our thermometer near the window, nor yet close to the fire; but about the middle of the room. Our walls shall have a smooth, non-absorbent surface; they may either be painted, or papered with a sanitary glazed wall paper, which can be washed. Our floors shall be covered with linoleum which can be easily kept clean; but we will have a big bright-looking hearthrug in front of the fire, and mats by the side of the beds.

We will have as little furniture as possible in both rooms. The table in the day nursery shall have a deal top which can be scrubbed. There must be an easy chair for nurse, and chairs suitable to the ages of the children. A little low table which can be easily moved is useful for games. We must have a cupboard with shelves in it for toys, and we must also have a screen, so that the very little ones, who have their games on the floor, may be shielded from draughts. Our beds shall have horsehair matrasses, and the bedsteads themselves shall be of enamelled iron or of brass, or they may be of polished wood which can be washed. They shall have no hangings or curtains about them. We will have a few really good pictures on our walls, and the ornaments on our mantel-piece, which shall be few in number, shall be really beautiful.

Children are unconsciously influenced by their surroundings, and if we want them to love and admire

beautiful things, we must see that their taste is not spoilt in their most impressionable years by letting their eyes become familiar with things that are ugly or vulgar. Our aim must be to make the nurseries cheerful, orderly, and beautiful.

Both day and night nurseries must be kept scrupulously clean. Dust must not be allowed to accumulate behind pictures, under the beds, or in corners, for dust, which contains many harmful germs, is said to be responsible for more of our illnesses than we have hitherto thought. The soiled-linen basket must not be kept in the nursery. The bedroom crockery must be perfectly clean. The rooms must be well ventilated. The upper sash of the window should always be opened a little, and indeed, whenever it is possible, both upper and lower sash should be opened. The lower part of the window should be protected by bars; but the upper part should be left free in case of fire, when the window might be the only means of escape.

CHAPTER IV

BABIES

THREE are so many books now on the management of babies (and the subject is certainly one which needs a book to itself) that we will only touch on a few points in connection with their upbringing.

Perhaps one of the first things to insist on is that it is the duty of every mother, whatever her rank in life, to nurse her own child. Nothing but ill-health or physical unfitness in some way can excuse her from this. It is certainly what nature intended her to do, and therefore it must be the best way. Doctors are constantly telling us that the death rate amongst babies, who are artificially fed, is out of all proportion to that of babies who are nursed at the breast. The poor little bottle-fed creature is a prey to various illnesses from which its happier sister escapes. It gets a bad start at the very beginning of life. And what right has any mother needlessly to endanger the life of her child? No words of condemnation can be too strong for the woman who is able to nurse her baby, but who, for selfish reasons will not do so. Mothers who fear that the nursing of their children will mean the giving up of society, and the curtailment of much enjoyment, need to have it pointed out to them that this side of the case has been exaggerated. To begin

with, the whole period of nursing only lasts nine months—not a very long time, surely, for a mother to deny herself for the sake of her child. Then, too, a healthy baby can be taught to be quite regular as to its feeding hours, so that the mother knows exactly what time she will be at liberty between those hours, and she can make her arrangements accordingly. *Some* curtailment of gaiety and outside engagements there must of course be.

But, after all, surely a mother's place is with her baby! Who is to care for its interests if she does not? It is of course right that she should have the help of nurse or governess in the bringing up of her children. She has other duties in life to perform besides the tending of her babies: but, beyond all question, they are her first and chief care. To her, and to no one else, belongs the responsibility of their well-being. She cannot shift it on to the shoulders of anyone else.

It is wonderful how soon even young babies can be taught good habits. They can learn to put themselves to sleep without being rocked or sung to, if they are, from the first, left in their cradles and expected to do so. They can be taught to be clean in their personal habits, if their wants are attended to regularly and at stated times. I do not say that good habits can be taught to babies quite *easily*. Great patience and perseverance are needed. I suppose it is true that all good work costs real effort. We must not be discouraged if there are difficulties. People who have never had children of their own are too apt to make out that certain results are sure to follow certain

courses of action, and that the bringing up of a child is quite a simple matter. The wisest and most experienced mothers tell us that there is much human nature even in a baby! They tell us, too, that theories, which look so well on paper, cannot always be carried out in practice. Allowances must sometimes be made.

Nevertheless it remains true that a watchful, self-disciplined woman, be she mother or nurse, can do much towards the formation of orderly, self-restrained habits in her baby, which will greatly simplify all after efforts in the training of character. What is wanted is that we shall be consistent. We must not pass over an offence one day, which we treat as a serious fault the next. It is no good saying that baby must not have a thing given to him just because he cries for it, if the next time we break our own rule by at once giving him what he cries for. It is difficult to avoid doing this sometimes; but we can easily see that we make our task of training all the harder by these occasional lapses. We make it harder for baby too. He finds it more difficult next time to be obedient or self-controlled because we were wanting in firmness on the last occasion.

Let us now consider the subject of fresh air and clothing for babies. They are more closely connected with what has gone before, than may at first sight appear. If children are kept healthy by pure air and suitable clothing, they are much more amenable and likely to form good habits than if their physical health is poor. "Naughtiness" in babies very often means that they are not well.

It used to be the fashion to keep babies closely confined to the house on all but very fine, warm days. Certainly this was the case during the early months of life. To allow a baby to have its mid-day sleep out of doors would have been considered madness. Now we have learned that fresh air is as essential to a baby as to a grown-up person. There are not many days in the year when a baby cannot safely be out most of the day, to the great benefit of its nerves and general health. If it is warmly clad and protected from cold winds, it can safely sleep out even in Winter. It should breathe fresh air in the nursery, too, as well as out of doors. The windows may always be open a little at the top; and when the children are out of doors, both doors and windows should be widely opened that the room may be thoroughly ventilated. It is easy to keep a baby from draughts by means of a screen.

Not only are our ideas with regard to fresh air for babies undergoing a change; but the clothing now considered best for them is also quite different from what it was even ten years ago. The most enlightened mothers are giving up the very long robe for the newly-born baby, and substituting one which only comes a few inches below its feet. This is, in every way, an advantage; it is more comfortable for baby not to have a heavy weight dragging down his feet; it is less expensive, and it is easier to wash. Many pretty little babies' first frocks are made of nun's veiling, which is soft, light and quickly washed. Instead of the little linen or calico shirt, which used to be worn, is a vest

made of fine, soft wool. The chief points to bear in mind in clothing a baby are that the garments must be warm, light, and loose enough to avoid pressure and to allow the limbs free play. It is a great convenience in dressing a young baby, if the clothes are *all* made to fasten either at the back or in front. This saves turning the child over. The little garments can be laid one on the top of the other, and baby's arms are slipped into all the armholes at once. Some of the little outfits now are made with all the fastenings at the side.

It is very important to keep the feet and legs warm. For this reason it seems safer, in our variable climate, for babies to wear something on their feet, though opinions differ on this point. The old-fashioned maxim that the head be kept cool and the feet warm still holds good.

For information on the subject of artificial feeding, bathing and general care of babies we must refer our readers to another¹ little work of the writer's.

¹ "The Care of Babies," by Mrs. H. C. Cradock. George Bell and Sons. 1s.

CHAPTER V

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDHOOD

IT may be well before we consider the subject of the formation of habits, to dwell for a little while on some of the characteristics of childhood. Perhaps first of all to be noticed is the activity of little children. A healthy child is hardly ever still except when its attention is engaged, and it is for the time absorbed in something which is interesting. A child will indeed remain motionless whilst some story is being told, but as soon as the story is ended movement begins again. It is as natural to the child to be almost always moving as it is to the old person to be quiet. It is this restlessness which makes children such tiring companions to older people. "They get on our nerves" as we say. That is one reason why in choosing a nurse we must look out for someone who is strong and healthy, and who is not given to "nerves."

The knowledge that it is *natural* and therefore good for children to be active will guide us greatly in our training. We shall not expect them to sit still for long together without occupation; we shall not expect the day nursery to be a quiet room, nor shall we expect it to be quite orderly and tidy on a wet day when its little inhabitants are kept indoors, and occupation has

to be found for them. We shall see that quiet games such as brick-building are succeeded by romps.

Although allowing full vent for activity, we must not, on the other hand, forget that these natural instincts need to be trained. It is right that children be taught by degrees that they must curb their restlessness at times. They must be taught, for instance, that at meal times they must not fidget, and that they must not talk when their elders are talking. They should be trained to amuse themselves quietly when they are in the room where their elders are working. Quite a tiny child can be taught to restrain its noise when its mother is ill. It is very important in these days, when children are indulged so much more than is good for them, that they should be taught to take thought for others. They are almost sure to grow up selfish and ill-mannered if they are allowed to be fidgety and noisy at improper times. We must aim in our teaching at hitting the happy mean; that is to say, we must allow for the natural activity of a child, while at the same time we must remember that there are times when that natural activity must be restrained.

Another characteristic of early childhood is timidity. Children vary very much in regard to their fears, and what seems only amusing to one child is grotesque and frightening to another. Babies are often frightened by anything which is unfamiliar. An unknown face, or the sight of its mother dressed in black—such things as these have been known to cause a cry of terror. A baby of a few months old was once very much frightened when it saw its little bed being moved out

of the nursery into its mother's room. When the bed was gone baby kept looking nervously and in a terrified way at the empty space, and crying afresh. Probably it was partly the strangeness of the proceeding which alarmed her, and then again, I suppose, she so identified herself with the bed that she felt as if in some way *she* were being taken away to some unknown place.

This fear of the unknown or unusual is very common in young children. So also is the fear of something which is only partly recognizable. A little girl not quite a year old was much frightened when she was brought in to see an uncle who very much resembled her father. The sight of *two* fathers was a mystery to the baby mind and therefore something to be feared. Professor Sully also relates an instance of this. A little boy of about ten months old, is said to have shown a marked shrinking from an uncle who strongly resembled the child's father.

Again, the sight of anything deformed or ugly is a source of terror to some children. I remember the case of a little girl being very much frightened by the sight of a man who had St. Vitus' dance in a bad form. The same child was terrified when on one or two occasions she met a drunken man.

The opinions of psychologists vary as to how far children are naturally afraid of the dark. Young babies do not, as a rule, show any signs of fear at being left in a dark room. Some people tell us that children would never fear the dark if the idea were not put into their minds by older people. They hear

such unwise remarks as "Isn't your little boy afraid of being left alone at nights?" and they at once begin to think that there must be something to be afraid of. But this does not explain the whole matter. There seems to be no doubt that many children, especially those of a highly imaginative nature, have an instinctive dread of the dark. Professor Sully says "The absence of light and the oncoming of night have, as we know, a lowering effect on the functions of the body; and it is not unlikely that this might so modify the action of the brain as to favour the rise of gloomy thoughts. The very blackness of night, too, which we must remember is actually seen by the child, would probably tend to darken the young thoughts. We know how commonly we make black and dark shades of colour symbols of melancholy and sorrow. If to this we add that in the night a child is apt to feel lost through a loss of all his customary landmarks, and that, worst of all, he is, in the midst of this blackness which blots out his daily home, left to himself, robbed of that human companionship which is his necessary stay and comfort, we need not, I think, wonder at his so often encountering the "terror by night." Happily, however, there are a large number of children to whom this fear of darkness is wholly unknown, and there would probably be a far larger number, were it not for the unwise conversations of their elders to which allusion has already been made. We cannot always guard our children from hearing things which they had better not have heard, and if a child does show signs of this fear, the wisest plan is to leave a little

light in the room. Many strict disciplinarians would, I know, object to this, but I believe, nevertheless, that it is the best thing to do. Fear is extremely harmful to little children. Untold injury may be done to the nervous organization of a child by a fright in early life. All threats such as "A bogey will get you," or "I will give you to the gipsies if you are a naughty girl" must be absolutely prohibited in the nursery.

The worst of it is, the fears which trouble nervous children the most, are often those which they mention to no one. They are afraid that grown-up people will not be able to understand, or they are shy of revealing their intimate experiences to ears which may be unsympathetic. Two little girls I knew in the country, lived in almost constant terror when they were out of meeting an old farmer, who used to run after them. This old man was really fond of children and thought he was amusing them; but it is not too much to say that he was a cause of real and deep misery to these little girls. I do not think it would have been of much use to have explained that old Jerry, as he was called, was really a kind-hearted man, even if the grown-up members of the family had known of the fear; but they never did know till the little girls themselves were grown-up.

Nervous, timid, children need to be carefully watched as to the pictures they look at; and the books that are read to them must be free from all dreadful and ugly things. One little girl of three found cause for fear in a delightful little book which related the adventures of a rabbit. The book looked innocent enough to grown-

up eyes; but the hairbreadth escapes of the rabbit excited the little girl; she feared that when caught trespassing, as trespassing he undoubtedly was, he would be caught and severely punished!

People are not, as a rule, half careful enough as to what they talk about in the presence of children. To relate an experience with an angry dog, or a vicious horse, may give a timid child a fear of dogs and horses which he may never get over all his life.

Of course many children are of a hardier build as to their nervous constitution than those we have been considering; but there seems to be no doubt at all that many and great are the fears of childhood. George Sand hardly exaggerated when she said "Fear is the greatest moral suffering of children."

Before we leave this subject of fear, which it has seemed well to dwell upon at some length, it may be well to add that the state of the bodily health has much to do with a child's nervous suffering. If he is physically well, he will be far less likely to be the victim of fears than if he is in a poor state of health.

Another characteristic of childhood is the beautiful trust and confidence which children place in those set over them. Sad indeed is it when this confidence is misplaced, when the little child learns for the first time that mother does not always keep her promises, or that nurse does not always speak the truth. We cannot be too careful with regard to the keeping of promises which we make to children. If we are trustworthy, and altogether truthful, they will trust and respect us. Indeed they do trust us naturally, it is

their instinct to do so, and it is only our unworthiness which ever makes them doubt or mistrust us.

Another characteristic must be mentioned and that is the imitative faculty of childhood. That is so obvious that it perhaps hardly needs much comment; but it is one which counts for much in the formation of character. It is the one too, which should make those who have charge of children careful, beyond anything else, of their words and conduct. They will copy us whether we like it or no; our very gestures are imitated. It is hardly too much to say that in the training of our children our example is practically everything. It is what we *are*, and not what we tell them to be, that really affects them for good or evil.

Yet another childish characteristic we will mention in conclusion, and that is the instinct of curiosity. Who that has had much to do with little children is not familiar with the perpetual "Why?" and "What is that for?" Too often the little questioner is snubbed and told "not to be inquisitive." Of course there are times when mother and nurse are really too busy to attend, and then the child must learn to wait in patience. But this curiosity is a most valuable characteristic. The child would learn but little without it. How thankful many teachers of older children would be if *their* pupils showed a little more curiosity sometimes. For they know that when once curiosity is aroused *attention* follows, and that is the "psychological moment" for teaching some new truth. How to answer the questions is not always an easy matter. Many times we must confess "I do not know," many times

" You are too young yet to understand." But let us at least try always to answer with patience and sympathy. Let us beware, too, of undervaluing the child's intelligence. And, above all, let us beware of telling him anything which he will afterwards have to unlearn.

CHAPTER VI

BODILY HEALTH—FOOD

OUR food has more to do with the state of our bodily health than perhaps anything else. We have seen how impossible it is for children to grow up healthy and strong without fresh air. Neither can they grow up healthy and strong without suitable food. The subject of children's diet is therefore of great importance to mothers and nurses. We certainly do not want the children themselves to think about their food; they are inclined to do that too much already; but those whose duty it is to arrange the meals of a household must give the matter much thought.

Our ideas have greatly changed with regard to food, as has been the case with so many other matters relating to health. It used to be considered best for children not only to live plainly, but to be fed on an almost unvarying diet. Bread and milk or porridge for breakfast; potato and gravy with perhaps a little meat and milk pudding for dinner; bread and butter and milk for tea—this was what many children were brought up on day after day. Now we are told that variety in food is essential to good bodily health. Not only so, but the natural tastes and cravings of children are, within reason, to be trusted as a guide to us in the choice of food. It will not do for us to shut our ears

to the modern theories and say “*We* used to eat such and such a thing, and our children must do the same.” “New occasions teach new duties.” We do not reason thus in other matters. We do not say that, because people who suffered from consumption were rigidly kept in doors in the olden days, therefore we also will keep our consumptive patients shut up. Nor do we say that outdoor games, such as cricket and golf, are only suitable for boys; we let our girls join in these, to the great advantage of their health and physique. We ought surely to be ready to welcome new knowledge. What was best in our grandmother’s days is not always the best for us now. Nevertheless, in these days of rapid change, it is possible that the pendulum may swing too far. The danger probably now is, that we give way too much to children’s likes and dislikes. Self-restraint and moderation are virtues that still need to be cultivated.

Let us now picture to ourselves the case of a young mother who, until children were born to her, had had no experience whatever in the feeding of these young creatures. What guidance can we give her? We will begin with the baby. We have already seen, in a former chapter, that the mother’s milk is baby’s food for the first nine months of life. At the risk of being thought wearisome, let us say once more that nothing can make up to a baby for the loss of this. If through the mother’s ill-health this natural food cannot be had, then artificial feeding must be resorted to. It is impossible in a little work of this kind to discuss in detail the various ways of bringing up “by hand.” The sub-

ject has been fully treated in "The Care of Babies"¹ to which I must refer my readers. After baby is weaned other foods besides milk must be gradually given. Baked and boiled custard puddings; lightly boiled or poached eggs; good gravy with mashed potatoes; well-made porridge with cream and milk; mashed bananas; milk puddings; beef tea; mutton broth; bread and butter with treacle and certain kinds of home-made jam; the pulp of stewed prunes and baked apples—all these may safely be given to most young children.

The change from a purely milk diet (which, with many children is advantageously adhered to for the first year of life) to a mixed one, must be made gradually. Sudden changes are sure to upset the stomach. Then, too, certain children will often show idiosyncrasies with regard to food which must be taken into account. Some cannot digest eggs; while others are upset by porridge, the oatmeal having an irritating effect upon the bowels. We must use our common sense in the matter and not try to force upon children things which, we have found by experience, really upset them.

Food that is liked and enjoyed (if, of course it is suitable for the digestion of a child) is really of more value than food that is eaten by compulsion. We are told, on good authority, that the frame of mind in which we take our meals makes a real difference to the way in which it nourishes us. For this reason also, children's meals should be made a time of bright-

¹ "The Care of Babies," by Mrs. H. C. Cradock. George Bell and Sons, 1s.

ness and joy. The table should be prettily arranged, the children themselves tidy and clean, the conversation cheerful, and the food served in an appetizing manner. Worry, excitement, and ill-temper, are fatal to good digestion.

Does all this thought about food seem to be making an unnecessary fuss? Does it seem as if we were teaching our children to care unduly for the things of the flesh? On the contrary, this care on the mother's part is to prevent the children's minds from dwelling on the subject. Those people who grow up caring too much about what they eat and drink are generally those who have *not* had variety, and whose home authorities have not given much thought to the nursery meals.

Children should be taught from the first that no remarks are to be made about what is set before them. They soon learn that it is considered a mark of bad breeding to talk about food at meal times.

Having seen that the diet must be varied, that meals should be eaten in cheerfulness and peace, another point to be remembered is, that food should be eaten slowly. If this were more often attended to, we should probably hear less of indigestion. We do not want children to dawdle over their food, as the habit of dawdling is, in itself, a very bad one, but we must impress on them, again and again, the duty of chewing it well. This is a matter which needs watchful care.

There are many other little matters which need constant attention whilst the children are in the nursery, if they are to have good "table manners." They must not drink while food is in the mouth. They

must eat with the mouth shut, and quietly. They must not talk when the mouth is full. They must be taught the proper way to hold the knife, fork, and spoon. Care and patience are needed on the part of the nurse or mother. Only those who have had meals constantly with little children just out of babyhood know how slow is the progress made in nice ways of eating and drinking. We must be careful not to "nag." *Some* offences we must shut our eyes to at times. There are times to see, and times when it is better not to see.

A good nurse once said to the writer "Meal times are the most difficult in the nursery; one seems to be always having to correct something." Example, of course, helps here as in all other matters of training; and if children can have, at any rate, some of their meals with the grown-up members of the family, it is well that they should do so. They learn unconsciously to imitate the manners of those about them, and their attention is not so much centred on themselves and their mistakes. It is probably not wise to insist always on a child's finishing what is on his plate. He cannot accurately gauge his appetite, neither can we. We may be forcing on him more food than the stomach can digest on days when perhaps he is not quite well. We must of course be on our guard against waste and mere caprice.

Again, I do not think that we can always trust to a child's appetite being a safe guide. With many children, no doubt, we can. But some delicate, excitable children would certainly not eat enough if left to themselves. They will often make a good meal

if their attention is distracted from themselves and their food. A wise mother, when she detects threatening signs of "nothing more, please" will describe something she has seen or done, or she will, in some way, take the children's attention away from their food with just an occasional reminder to "go on with your dinner."

With regard to the question of milk, as to whether it should always be sterilized, doctors tell us that if we can be quite sure that it is *clean*, there is no doubt that it had better not be sterilized; but it is difficult to be sure of cleanliness, therefore, for delicate children perhaps it is safer to sterilize it. It is said that some vital property in the milk is destroyed by sterilization—that it is not quite as nourishing as milk fresh from the cow. If this be the case, and if we are satisfied that our milk comes from a well-managed farm, then the verdict, on the whole, seems to be that we had better give healthy children unsterilized milk.

CHAPTER VII

BODILY HEALTH—CLOTHING

WE wear clothes that the body may be kept comfortably warm both in Summer and Winter. We need protection from the hot sun in Summer, and from the cold of Winter. It is not always easy in such a climate as we have in England to clothe ourselves so as to attain this object; we are apt to “cast” some of our Winter clothes on the first appearance of Spring, and then to feel the ill effects of the east winds, which are prevalent at this season of the year.

Children should be clothed as much as possible in light, loosely-woven woollen garments. Wool is a bad conductor, that is, it does not readily allow the heat of the body to pass through it into the air; nor the outside cold to pass through it to the body. If the clothes are made of closely-woven and heavy material, the weight of them is a drag on the limbs, and the perspiration of the body is not allowed to escape. As soon as a baby is able to dispense with napkins, little drawers should be worn. The legs and feet should be well protected, especially in Winter, by woollen stockings and sound shoes. A little girl of from three years old and upwards may be comfortably dressed in the Winter as follows: woollen combinations, soft stays, to which buttons are attached at the waist, calico drawers, serge

knickerbockers, a little serge skirt attached to a bodice, and a woollen jersey. If, as occasionally happens, the skin is too sensitive to bear wool next the body, a silk vest (or one with a mixture of silk in it) can be worn under the combinations. Over all this, a pinafore should be worn. This is easily washed, and it keeps the little jersey and skirt clean. The stockings are kept up by suspenders. A little boy may be dressed in much the same way during the early years, except that knickerbockers will take the place of the serge skirt.

This way of clothing a child ensures warmth and comfort, and freedom for the limbs; and if these are secured we have all we want. The little pinafore or overall may be made as prettily as we like; we do not want all children to be dressed exactly alike. There is no reason why they should be dowdy, because they are sensibly dressed. Nothing is, I think, prettier than the little smocks for young children. However, let each mother use her own taste and skill. What we want is, sufficient but not too much warmth for the body; room for growth; perfect freedom for the limbs, without pressure on any of the organs and materials which will wash. Provided that we secure these, we can dress our children as we like.

For outdoor wear, jackets are better than cloaks; they keep the arms covered and at the same time leave them free. Hats should be sufficiently large to shield from the rays of the sun; but in windy weather a little cap or bonnet is more convenient. A pair of woollen gloves and gaiters (for winter wear) complete the toilet.

For summer wear, wool is still the best as an article of clothing; we may then lessen the number of garments. The tendency, as a rule, is to overclothe children.

The chief problem in connection with night clothing for children, is how to keep any clothes on them at all! Little children are often restless in their sleep, and they show an almost invariable tendency to kick off all their coverings. Their feet and legs are often chilled in this way. Woollen sleeping-suits, made in the form of combinations with socks attached, seem to be the best sort of night wear. If the whole body is well protected in this way, it does not matter so much if the blankets are thrown off. The blankets themselves should be warm but light. A heavy weight on the body in bed is not conducive to sleep, and is unhealthy for other reasons also.

It is perhaps hardly necessary in these days, when the value of fresh air is so well known, to say how important it is that the night nursery should have the window always open at the top. Doctors tell us that night air is not in any way unwholesome. Children who sleep with the windows open are much less likely to catch cold than those who breathe vitiated air. It stands to reason that the body must be in a better condition to resist illness if it is kept healthy than if it is in a low state of vitality; and a healthy condition can hardly be maintained by those who, at night, breathe over and over again, air charged with more than its proper proportion of carbonic acid gas. A screen can be used to keep draughts from the children's

beds, and in very cold weather extra clothing, such as a little jersey or woollen jacket, can be worn in addition to the sleeping-suit.

With regard to the buying of children's clothing, it is certainly better to make most of the things at home, if it can be managed. Far better value for our money can be obtained in this way. Ready-made children's clothes are dearer, in proportion, than those for grown-up people. They look attractive in the shop windows, and we give ourselves the pleasure of buying what we think would be so pretty for our little boy or girl; but we find very often, that the material is poor, and that the little frock is badly "finished off."

But sometimes the question arises, with a young mother, as to how much time she ought to give to needlework, and how much to reading, to other duties, or to recreation. We have to remember, what is very often forgotten, that there are husbands to be considered. It is quite necessary to give a word of warning about this. A young mother becomes so engrossed with her children, that she does not give her husband so much of her society as she ought. She should remember that he sometimes likes to have her alone, without the children, and without the fashion books and her cutting-out apparatus! She ought to keep up her reading for his sake, as well also for the sake of the children in after years. One of the best and most devoted mothers I know, said once: "I do *not* think the children ought to come first; the husband ought to have the first place." With some women, mentally indolent, the temptation is great to devote too much

time to the making of little garments. Solid reading is neglected, and gradually the mental powers deteriorate. This is surely a mistake from all points of view. By-and-by, when the children are grown up, they will need their mother's sympathy in their intellectual life, and it will be a grievous loss to her as well as to the children if they turn to her in vain.

Of course the question of expense often settles the matter to a large extent. Where the income is small, it may be a matter of necessity that all the clothes be made by the mother. If she cannot afford to keep a good nurse, she is obliged to spend a fair amount of time in needlework.

CHAPTER VIII

BODILY HEALTH—GENERAL REMARKS

WE have considered the subject of children's food and clothing. Let us now go on to think about some other little matters connected with their bodily health.

One important point to notice is the way children breathe. They ought to breathe through the nose, with the mouth shut. If we find a baby with his mouth open, we must gently but firmly close his lips. Very often it is only a bad habit into which he has fallen, and one which can be corrected by perseverance. If, however, as the child grows, we find that he persists in keeping his mouth open, and that he breathes with difficulty when it is closed, we had better consult a doctor. There may be adenoids, which are little growths at the back of the nose. These will have to be removed. The operation is not a dangerous one, and the child's health generally shows a marked improvement after it. Indeed it is difficult to keep a child well if he has adenoids. As he is obliged to breathe through his mouth, the air enters the lungs cold and laden with impurities, and he is constantly "catching cold," if he does not suffer from more serious chest and lung troubles.

Children ought never to be taken unnecessarily to a house in which there is illness. If they are at all in a poor state of health, they are very liable to "catch" whatever is going. Even the common cold which, when neglected, may lead to serious illness is, we are now told by doctors, a form of infectious fever. Of course our aim must be to keep a child in such a good state of health that he does not readily fall a prey to disease. This is best secured by plenty of fresh air, sunshine, wholesome and varied food, cleanliness, sound teeth, sufficient sleep, and happiness without undue excitement.

A mother once asked a doctor of much experience if a child, who caught cold easily had better be kept indoors except on fine days. His answer was "I am strongly in favour of treating *all* colds and bronchial affections by the fresh air method. Prejudice, however, is still strongly against it." This led on to further questions with regard to a number of points in connection with the health of children. As the doctor most kindly gave permission for his answers to be quoted, I will give them as they were written down at the time, without attempting any classification.

Does it do children any harm to be wakened in the morning? Had they better have their "sleep out"?

No, if the child is well and has slept properly.

Would you advise children to have meat once a day?

Certainly as a rule and unless there are reasons for deciding otherwise. Children however do fairly well without meat if they get milk and eggs.

Is it a good thing to give children hard things to bite, such as biscuits, crusts, etc.? Does it do their teeth good? Would you let babies just beginning solid food have crusts, etc.? Is there a danger in their not chewing them sufficiently, and so causing indigestion?

I am sure it is always good to give hard things to a child to bite and helps the development of the teeth and jaws. It is the excess of soft food which is largely responsible for poor and crowded teeth.

Opinions seem to be so divided as to the advisability of sterilizing milk. What would you advise?

Milk loses some of its good qualities by being sterilized. If the source of supply is good it is best not to sterilize for healthy children. If the source is suspicious or the child predisposed to tubercle it is best to sterilize it.

Is Yorkshire pudding indigestible for children?

A healthy child will digest it quite well in moderate amount. For invalids special rules must be made.

Do seeds in jam (e.g. in raspberry) do any harm to young children?

They are distinctly good in moderation.

A certain little girl, aged three and a half years, has always "turned against" porridge and milk puddings; they seem to make her feel sick. Would you try to make her eat them?

It is useless trying to "make" quite young children eat food they have turned against. Where an older child is simply fastidious that is another matter. Somehow many modern children "turn against" milky foods when about three to six years old.

A little girl I knew got rheumatic fever, and some-

one said it was because she was not properly dried after her bath. Is that likely to have been the cause? I mean, is that the sort of thing to lead to such an illness?

This is possible, but only if the child were on the verge of an attack of rheumatic fever. Of course all children should be properly dried after a bath and well rubbed down.

Is it more restful to sleep in the dark than in the light?
Yes, certainly.

Is it advisable to let, (a) a healthy child go out in foggy weather? (b) a child who catches cold easily?

Certainly. Foggy weather is not specially unhealthy. A child who "catches cold easily" I send out every day if possible and make sleep with wide open windows. Among ignorant people and some who should know better the old prejudice against fog and night air is very strong.

Could meningitis be brought on by over-excitement or over-study?

No, unless a child were on the edge of an attack. In tubercular meningitis, practically the only form that children suffer from, the cause is wholly from within, and it is due to the tubercular infection. One generally hears however some "explanation" like "his work was too much for him" or "It came on after — —" (things which had no real causative value).

Is paddling in the sea safe for ordinary healthy children?

Hundreds of thousands do it every year and are rendered happy and take no harm. Only common-sense is needed.

Is it a good thing to teach a child to use its left hand

equally with the right? I have read that to use the left hand develops the right half of the brain—is this true? I have heard two doctors speak *against* using the left hand.

It is rather a good plan to teach a child to be clever with its left hand, but complete ambidexterity is a retrograde step, because by specialising our right hand we attain greater skill than would be possible if we gave attention to both. It is possible, but not very important, that the use of the left hand might encourage some motor centres of the brain.

Is the present fashion of letting little children wear no hats in hot weather safe and advisable? Is it advisable in very cold weather?

In a hot sun of course a hat is desirable, also in very cold weather. Otherwise it is a matter of indifference. The hatless folk are often faddists and are therefore unsafe guides.

What are the common causes of rupture in young children?

Generally a tendency from birth (often hereditary). I know of no common accidental causes, but of course it sometimes follows violent straining in whooping cough, vomiting, etc.

If a child walks in his sleep, is it advisable to wake him? Would leading him back to bed be likely to wake and startle him?

He should be led back to bed quietly and told very plainly and distinctly to stay there. He will usually obey without waking. I have never known harm arise from awaking a sleep-walker.

We read that arsenic is dangerous in nursery wall-papers. Is it because the children might lick it, or how does it affect them?

Yes, and also in some cases the dust from the walls has been said to have caused arsenical poison. (Seldom.)

Is it better for children to lie on the right side only? I am told that a baby should, after a meal, be put on its right side to sleep.

There is nothing in this as regards the normal healthy child.

Why do children have bad dreams when they lie on their backs?

It is not the normal attitude for sleep in any animal. Probably the pressure of a loaded stomach on the solar plexus of nerves causes an irritability of the nerves and brain generally.

At what age would you let an ordinary healthy child begin cold baths in the morning?

I am not a strong advocate of cold baths for little children. Often they are a mistake. A sponge full of cold water after a warm or tepid bath is preferable. In hot weather or in hot climates this does not apply.

Are children better bare-footed or shod?

I would let a robust child run barefoot as much as possible. A more delicate child is best shod.

Is it a bad plan to drink at meal times?

As a rule yes.

Children should be taught to sit and stand upright without stooping. Ungainly attitudes, besides spoiling the appearance of a child have a bad effect on his

growth and development. A narrow chest, curvature of the spine, and one shoulder higher than the other are among the evils which may result from wrong attitudes of the body.

Another very important matter to be attended to is children's teeth. Here, again, it is not the appearance only which has to be considered, though a bad set of teeth do undoubtedly spoil a pretty face. But the child's digestion, and therefore his health generally, depend so much on the state of the teeth, that we need to watch them carefully. Prevention is so much better than cure. Children ought to pay periodical visits to the dentists, whether they have toothache or not. We are apt to think that the milk teeth, as the first set are called, are not of much consequence, as they are only temporary. But the state of the permanent teeth, which begin to appear when the child is about six years old, is to a certain extent, dependent on the state of the first, and so, for that reason it is important to keep them all sound and clean from the beginning. A little soft toothbrush must be in use from early days, and it should be used in an up and down direction, as well as from side to side, so that particles of food may be removed from between the teeth. The teeth should be brushed certainly twice a day—morning and night.

The boots that children wear are often too narrow in the foot, and also too short. The soles should be the same shape as the under part of the foot, and there should be a little length beyond the toes to allow for growth. Corns, bunions, cold feet, and a general

feeling of tiredness come from ill-fitting shoes. They should be strong, and as far as possible water-tight, but not too heavy.

If children live in the country, where there is not much dust or smoke in the air, it is better not to wash the hair very often, as washing is said to injure it. It can be kept clean by a good use of the brush. It is, of course, necessary that the brushes are frequently washed. But in the town, brushing will probably not be enough for cleanliness.

We will conclude this chapter by a warning to those who have the charge of children, not to allow them to sit on wet grass, nor to keep on wet clothing (especially shoes and stockings) in the house. We are told that the getting wet does not hurt us as long as we are moving about; but that the sitting in wet clothes is very liable to bring on a chill of some kind.

CHAPTER IX

CHILDREN'S GAMES

IT is natural to all young creatures to be active and full of movement and life. Mothers say, and say truly, that there is something amiss with a little child when it is quiet for long together. Of course there are exceptions to this rule; but, generally speaking, the average healthy child should be "on the go" for a great part of each day. Its muscles need to be strengthened and developed by active exercise, and this exercise is secured to young children by the games they naturally play when left to themselves. There is no need for anything in the way of organized drill or calisthenics for children who are yet in the nursery. All they need is plenty of space, pure air to breathe, and suitable clothing for their play.

When we consider how valuable in later life is the power of being able to interest and amuse ourselves without being dependent upon others, we shall see the wisdom of training children from an early age to amuse themselves. This is quite easy to do where there are two or more children in a family, but with an only child, it needs a little more care. However, it can be done, and it is a matter of so much importance that it is worth taking some trouble about. Even quite a baby can be taught to amuse itself. It should be left

on some safe place to kick its little legs about, before it can sit up; and when it is promoted to a chair, it can be given bricks or some simple toy to play with. If it sees from the first, that its mother is too busy to play with it, it will gradually accommodate itself to the necessities of the case. But if, every time it cries, its mother runs to amuse it, it will soon know its power, and use it. It is better in every way for the child that he should be left a good deal alone. Of course watchful eyes must be near, and words of sympathy and encouragement should be given. We do not want a child to feel lonely; on the other hand, we do not want him to feel that he is being constantly thought about and observed. As for toys, the simpler they are the better. It is folly and waste of money to buy expensive ones. Those which the child can make for himself, or which his mother can make for him, are the ones he enjoys the most. The clever mechanical toys, which grown-up people think so ingenious, are not the best for children. They leave little or nothing to the imagination. We would not, however, banish all toys from the nursery. The dolls, which become such real people to the little girls who nurse and care for them, are a source of much happiness, and that in itself is sufficient reason for their presence. But, besides that, they may be a real training in motherliness. Then, too, the doll's house—who would have the heart to banish that? It need not be an expensive one. If it can be made at home, and the "furnishing" done by degrees, it will give far more pleasure than an elaborate one bought ready furnished at a shop. Balls, skipping-ropes, and

battledore and shuttlecock are all excellent toys. They give ample scope for the exercising of the various parts of the body. Bricks, too, are good. Only those who have watched a little child with them know how many and various are the things which can be built with them. They are, moreover, not merely an amusement either; the high tower, which the little hands build with such carefulness, are a training of hand and eye; the house must be steadily constructed if we are to put "windows" in, and so we might go on. Concentration, perseverance, carefulness, and dexterity of hand are all needed in the building of a good house of bricks.

As the children get a little older drawing, painting and modelling are all sources of delight, and excellent training for hand and eye and artistic sense. What we have to see to is that the children are occupied. The "naughty" fits will marvellously diminish in number if little hands and brain are kept busy.

But we have not yet mentioned the games, which perhaps give the most pleasure of all, the games of "pretending." Surely that is a dull and cold-hearted person, who has not watched with delight the little mites of three and four who "'tend" to be so many wonderful people and things! I know a little girl of three, who will amuse herself by the hour together with her "pretendings." One moment she is "Mrs. Dones" (Jones) dressing her family and taking them out for a walk, the incidents of which walk are truly wonderful. Then the scene changes, shopping must be done, new shoes (blue ones) are urgently

required for one of the family. Again, a long journey must be taken, the sea is to be visited; there are the delights of packing, the cab with "the white horsey" is even now on its way to the house.

These games are to be encouraged; not only do they keep children happily amused, but they have a valuable educational value in that they train the imagination. A wise mother or nurse, sitting by with her work, watching the play unobserved by the children, will know how to put in a word when needed; she will guide and direct without in any way checking the personality of the little actors.

It may be necessary sometimes with an excitable, over-imaginative child, to change the game, when it has gone on for some time—to give some mechanical occupation, that the brain may have rest. Active games, which call the imagination into play should be succeeded by something quieter and less exhausting. Many a fit of crying and naughtiness is caused by weariness. It is always well just before bedtime that some quiet occupation should be indulged in. To send a little child to bed with its mind full of excitement will probably lead to wakefulness, or dreams, or sleep-walking.

Games played out of doors, it need hardly be insisted on, are always to be preferred to those in the nursery. Whenever it is possible, let the children be out of doors. There they can shout and play without disturbing the older members of the family, besides which, they are breathing purer air, and so laying up stores of health and vigour for later years.

The more organized games of cricket, rounders and hide and seek, etc., we need not discuss here, as they concern children of an older age than those we are considering.

We must not close this chapter without a warning as to the danger of allowing very young children to play with small beads, berries, or any things which may easily go into the mouth. Baby has a way of testing the properties of many things in this way, and the only safe plan till he has got beyond this stage, is to give him playthings that are too big to choke him or to slip down his throat. He will get over this desire of putting everything into his mouth if we will only give him time. Meanwhile, let us, as we have said, avoid giving him small toys, and let us also avoid painted things.

There is another danger to be guarded against, and that is the danger of fire. Many children seem unable to resist the temptation to strike matches or to see paper burn. The bright, pretty blaze attracts them. Here again, danger must, as far as possible, be kept out of their way. Matches must be put beyond the reach of little fingers, and fires must be protected by guards. Strict orders must be given that fire is never to be touched. If ever it is legitimate to whip a child (the consideration of which subject we will return to in a later chapter) the sort of offence which deserves such a punishment is probably this one—that of playing with danger when it has been forbidden.

Since we are on the subject of dangers in the nursery, we must not forget that cans of hot water

left standing on the floor, linoleum or boards made too slippery by polishing, bottles of medicine or poison left about, may all be causes of disaster. So too may needles and pins left carelessly on the floor.

Out of doors, in these days of motor cars and bicycles and trams, the crossing of the roads is a serious matter to little people. We do not want to magnify dangers, nor to manufacture them; but the annual number of road accidents is a very grave matter. We must lay it down as a rule that it is never safe to cross a road without first looking both ways to see that it is clear.

CHAPTER X

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

FOR the children we are considering, who are still in the nursery we shall not require much in the way of books, except picture-books. Educationalists are telling us now that children should not be taught to read till they are at least six or seven years old. I do not know enough about the brain to be able to dispute this. One would have thought that as children vary so much it might be advisable to teach the strong, lively ones a little before that age, in order to give them another occupation, say during illness or on days when they cannot get out. There is a certain stage of mischievousness (at least we used to call it mischievousness, now we call it natural curiosity or activity!) which little boys about the age of five or six often go through; their animal spirits are too much sometimes even for the long-suffering mother or nurse. "We were obliged to teach him to read to keep him out of mischief," said a mother the other day. Children who learn their alphabet as a game, and almost teach themselves to read, as many do, with very little effort, can hardly suffer from any brain trouble in the process. We must, however, watch that too much time is not given to books. This may become a real danger to some children. Their

learning, in these early years must not be done by means of books, but by *things*. In a well-ordered home, where the parents are intelligent, or indeed in any home, the children are unconsciously learning all day long. Their natural curiosity leads them to use their eyes, their ears, their fingers; and it is by means of these that they learn all that is best for them to learn in their early years. Probably much harm to true education has been done in the past by trying to teach children too soon by means of books. They learned words, and we deceived ourselves into thinking that therefore they understood the ideas which the words were meant to convey. "When did your little boy begin lessons?" "When he was in the cradle" answers the mother. For baby is "doing his lessons" all day long. He is noticing and touching, and tasting, and smelling, and hearing.

Soon picture-books will be a delight to him. When he reaches an age at which he can enjoy them, let us see to it that he has *good* pictures to look at. There is no reason, in these days of cheap books, why he should look at poor ones. His taste is gradually being cultivated long before he knows the names of the colours and forms that he sees. Impressions are all the time being made on the brain. Scientific men tell us that we are greatly influenced by our early surroundings; therefore it is most important that children see what is good and beautiful from the first. We are inclined to say that it cannot make much difference to a tiny child what sort of books or pictures he looks at, or what sort of a nursery he

lives in. But those who know most about the development of the whole man—his body, soul, and spirit—tell us that it does matter. Impressions made in the early years of life are the most lasting ones, and therefore the ones that most affect character.

So we will let the pictures and story-books be good of their kind, if they are few in number. And there is no need to have many. Most children nowadays have far more than is good for them. They do not learn to love and value them in the same way that their mothers and grandmothers loved and valued the few that they possessed. Children love to read, or to hear read, the same story over and over again. It must be told, too, in exactly the same words every time. Professor Sully relates what a storm of indignation was aroused in a certain nursery when a friend of his repeating "Puss in Boots" inadvertently made the hero sit on a chair instead of on a box to pull on his boots.

Stories in which evil doing is prominent are to be avoided. So also are stories of mischievous children. A child's mind is easily confused between what is mere mischief and what is real naughtiness. The kind of story which may seem very amusing to the grown-up mind, is not always the best for children, though it may concern entirely the doings of children. Many books are written nowadays about children, which are delightful to a child-lover, but which are not suitable for the children themselves. People often make a mistake about this. They wish to buy some book for a child, and they just glance inside, and see

that it is all about the doings of children, and they come to the conclusion that therefore it must be all right.

In choosing books for little children, perhaps some of the chief points to bear in mind are these—

1. Let the story be one in which virtue is made to triumph over wrong-doing.

2. Stories written intelligently about animals are good, as teaching a love for them.

3. Well-chosen fairy tales and others, which give play to the imagination are good.

4. All stories which contain anything frightening or ugly are to be avoided.

5. Stories which deal chiefly with motives and feelings are unsuitable for children, as tending to encourage introspection.

6. Only those books in which the style and language are really good should be put before children. A child who has from the first been fed on what is best in literature will instinctively choose the best when he is grown up. A father who took great pains in the education of his little girl was very particular as to the books she had when she was quite a young child. He said "She shall only have the best, however elementary they may be." Many years afterwards, the child's mother related to a friend how successful the training had been—"Rachel turns instinctively away from weak and trashy books. Without my saying anything about her choice, she naturally chooses what is good; she simply does not enjoy what is poor." This girl was not in the least

priggish or “superior;” she was an ordinary, healthy-minded English girl; but having always had the best, she naturally turned away from what was feeble or base.

7. Stories in which the comic element largely predominates are to be avoided. By all means let us cultivate joy and a sense of humour in children. But to be always reading funny things induces, as Miss Mason points out, a frivolous habit of mind.¹

In conclusion, let us teach children to be careful with their books. We want them to learn to love good literature. The habit of reading is one for which they will thank us much in after days. But we shall not help them if we allow them to come to their books with dirty hands, or to toss them about the room, or to tear or disfigure the pages.

¹ “Home Education,” by C. M. Mason.

CHAPTER XI

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS TRAINING—I

“WHOSOEVER shall offend one of these little ones which believe on me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.” These are our Lord’s words regarding our dealings with children. To “offend” in the Greek means “to cause to stumble.” We “offend” these little ones when we do anything to hinder, or leave undone anything to help, their Christian progress.

The teaching of the Church is that at Baptism the child is given Divine life; he is made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven. He is then handed over to his guardians, who are to foster the Divine life; that is to say, they are to train the will and to educate the conscience. What a tremendous responsibility! There is surely no work on earth requiring such fine gifts as this. But let no one who has the charge of children be disheartened. It is not the clever, but the good woman, who is most successful in this work. She may know very little about mental physiology, or psychology; she may not be a great theologian, and yet she may be far more able to train the character of a child

than one who is learned in many sciences. For it is the disciplined Christian Will which counts for so much in the character of one who has the charge of children. Here, if anywhere, it is the character which tells.

Let me not be misunderstood. To say that a mother or teacher need not be learned, does not mean that she must not strive to improve herself. God nowhere promises to supply our deficiencies when we ourselves are careless and idle. That has never been His method of working. We must use our intellect and our will; we must strive, by every means in our power, to fit ourselves for the work He has given us to do. *Then* we may expect His Divine aid. Our aim in all our religious teaching must be so to train the character of the child, that he may gradually grow more and more like the Perfect Man, Christ Jesus.

This training of the character is by no means confined to the definite time set apart for the religious lesson, which the mother should, if possible, always give herself. It is being carried on daily, hourly, by all the circumstances and events of everyday life. The child is continually being influenced by his surroundings. Nothing is insignificant which concerns him. This does not mean that we must be always on the watch for "tendencies" in the child; we must not always be correcting, and "improving the occasion." On the contrary, there must be a great deal of letting the child alone. But it does mean, that the character of the mother or nurse is all-important. If we *must* choose between the good woman and the intellectual,

let us, by all means, choose the good. But it is not necessary for good people to be wanting in intellect!

Now what is the first idea that the mother shall give to the child of God? Surely that He is a God of love. Quite a little child can grasp the idea that there is someone else who loves him, besides his father and mother, someone who is all goodness, who likes to see him happy, and who is sorry when he is in trouble. Then he can be told that this one is God, a Father, whose little child he became when he was taken to the Church as a baby to be christened. From that follows the idea that we can speak to this Father, we can thank Him for kind things He does for us, and ask for His help. We call this speaking to Him, Prayer. After that, comes the thought that this loving Father is pleased when He sees His children trying to do right, and grieved when they do wrong, and so we introduce the idea of Sin. The next step is that God forgives us when we are sorry for our wrong-doing. Then follows the thought that we need help in the fight against sin, and that God gives this help, which we call Grace.

The little child must be led on, by degrees, as he is "able to bear it" from truth to truth. It is most important that children's first ideas of God should not be connected with fear. That they should think of Him firstly and chiefly as a punisher of wrong-doing is bad in every way. We must, above all things, be *true* in our teaching. To tell a child that God does not love him because he is a naughty boy, is not only mischievous, it is untrue. If questions are asked which we cannot answer, we must say simply that we

do not know. Or, again, if questions are asked, the answers to which are beyond the child's understanding, we must say that we will explain later on.

There are those who tell us that children are born good, and that they are only made naughty by bad training. Surely the truer teaching is that they are born with inherited tendencies to both good and evil. The child brought up in the wisest and most loving way will sometimes be really naughty, and this because of the evil nature with which he was born, and because Satan's power is still so real. It is true that bad training strengthens the evil enormously, and that it and bad physical health have much to do with "naughtiness," but they hardly explain the whole matter.

With young children, one great secret of success is to keep them happily employed. The old lines of Watts are still true, "For Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do." Another important point is the cultivation of the habit of obedience. If children are allowed to disobey lawful authority with impunity, then unhappiness for themselves and their rulers is assured. Obedience is the very foundation of the Christian life, and unless the habit of obedience to parents and to God is formed in early years, trouble and disaster will inevitably follow. What is wanted is that the ruler in the nursery should be firm, consistent and kind, and that she should expect her orders to be obeyed. Children are much happier when they are firmly governed. They respect and love those whom they are made to obey far more than those whose rule is weak and vacillating. Young nurses find it hard to

believe this. They think to gain the little ones' love by giving way to them even against their own better judgement. But all those who have had much experience in the management of children, know that firmness and a certain amount of strictness make for true happiness. With very young children no reasons should be given for our commands. It is enough for them that "Mother or nurse says so." Gradually, as they learn that what mother or nurse says is always right, they will learn to co-operate in this matter of obedience. This is, indeed, what we have to aim at. Blind, unreasoning obedience must come first, but unless it leads the children to govern themselves it is not worth much.

Another great help in the training of character is the putting before the child as far as possible, only good and beautiful examples of life and conduct. The mind, to a large extent, dwells on what the eye sees and the ear hears, and if a child thinks of evil, the next step is the doing of it. It is better, for this reason, that stories of naughty children be kept from him. Noble deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice should be brought before him, for he unconsciously imitates what he sees and hears. Their picture books, too, should only have pure and good pictures in them.

Let us summarize the points which we have mentioned in the moral and religious training of children, before we go on to consider the subject further. We have seen that (1) God holds children in high regard; (2) that the child was made God's child at Baptism; (3) that the mother's duty is to foster the Divine life

given at Baptism; (4) that, in order to train the child's character successfully, right ideas about God must be put before him; (5) that obedience is the foundation on which Christian character is built; (6) that the child is greatly helped by seeing and hearing, as far as possible, only what is good and beautiful.

CHAPTER XII

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS TRAINING—II

HABITS

CARLYLE speaks of Habit as “the deepest law of human nature. It is our supreme strength; if also, in certain circumstances our miserablest weakness.” We are familiar with the old saying that “Habit is ten natures.” Now we know how much “human nature” there is in a child; are we not, indeed, baffled at times by the force of it, when our careful plans and most cherished theories miscarry? So then, if habit may become a power even stronger than this strong nature, it follows that the formation of habits is of tremendous importance in the education of a child. So important indeed is it, that unless we take pains to form *good* habits in the child we shall find all our future work with him hampered at every turn. And not only so, but his own life will inevitably suffer, and he will have just cause of complaint against those who might, when he was young have made almost anything of him.

Now it does not need any great knowledge of psychology to see how comparatively easy it is to form certain habits in the little child, and how difficult to change those habits in old age. An acrobat’s child,

who is trained from almost babyhood to walk on the tight rope soon finds no difficulty in accomplishing this feat. He gets into the *habit* of doing this because his father has made him try it over and over again until constant repetition has made it easy—first a helping hand was given to him, and gradually he was left to balance himself. Now suppose we tried to teach an old man to walk on the tight rope, we do not need a very keen power of imagination to foresee the result! So, too, with mental habits. The habit of close observation, which can, with a little care and patience be cultivated in a young child, is very difficult to acquire in later life.

We can imagine a young mother or teacher for the first time confronted with the task of training a child, saying, “Yes, I know that it is important to form good habits, and I know that it is easier to do so when children are young than when they are older; but how am I to set about it?” To such, a few rules, which have been found helpful by experienced teachers in the past may be of use.

(1) In trying to help a child to form some good habit, do not allow him *once* to fail. For instance, suppose we are teaching him to put away his toys after a game, we must see that he puts them away after every game. The point in itself may seem trivial. The mother thinks she could put them away so much more quickly herself, and her little boy looks tired, she will do it “just this once” for him. But that is a mistake. She has undone the good of much effort on her own part and on the child’s that has gone

before. The *habit* which was being formed is weakened, and next time the little boy finds it harder to put away his toys. "Why do you come to the table without washing your hands, when you know I always send you to do it?" asked a mother of her son. "Once you didn't," said the boy.¹

(2) Give plenty of practice when trying to form a new habit. It is constant repetition which makes things easy to do. For instance, suppose we are trying to form in the child the habit of helpfulness. We must give him many opportunities of little acts of service. His natural activity will help him here. Encourage him to fetch his father's slippers, to hand his mother a book, to run upstairs for something that has been forgotten. The frequent doing of little things for the sake of others helps him to form the habit of helpfulness almost unconsciously, and without much effort. But if, instead of giving him these frequent opportunities of service, we allow weeks to pass without demanding anything of him, if indeed he sees that we do not expect him *often* to do things for us, then the habit has not much chance to grow; we make it then a difficult one to acquire. For the danger is, that unless a good habit is allowed full scope, the contrary habit may, and in all probability will, assert itself. A child, who is not encouraged to help others is not only not learning helpfulness, but he is forming the habit of selfishness.

(3) If, unhappily, some bad habit has already been formed, we must set about its cure by trying to incul-

¹ Harrison, "A study of Child Nature."

cate its opposite good habit. We will suppose that a child has got into a way of talking in an unpleasantly loud voice. It is not enough to tell him not to shout; we must show him how to speak properly. Positive guidance is, as a rule, better than negative. It is better to say "Speak softly," than "Don't shout." The effect upon the child is not so irritating. And here, I should be inclined, in spite of what has been said, about never allowing a fault to pass when we are trying to form some good habit to make an exception to our general rule. If a child comes in from a party, or some other bit of gaiety, and begins to relate in loud, excited voice the joys of the evening, it would be a want of tact to hush him up at once with "Speak softly," or "Don't you remember how I told you to speak?" The effect would be chilling and exasperating to one who had come in sure of his mother's sympathy. Tact is needed as well as watchfulness and persistence in the training of character. It is important that a child should feel that he can always count on his mother's sympathy. In the above instance, to answer him in a quiet tone of voice, without letting the quietness be too apparent, would be the wiser course to adopt. It would probably have its effect, for here, as elsewhere, "Example is better than precept."

Indeed so powerful is the force of example that many of the habits with which a child grows up are picked up unconsciously. We are all greatly influenced by our surroundings. It is easier for us to be orderly and tidy when staying with orderly people, than when we are with people who are always in a

muddle. Or again, we should not like to appear in a room with dirty hands and unkempt hair, where everybody was clean and beautifully dressed. If we live long with orderly and well-dressed people we strive to be orderly and well-dressed too—we gradually acquire the habit of order and neatness. And if this is so with grown-up people, it is, as we have seen, true to a much larger extent with children.

One danger to be avoided in this work of forming habits is that of “nagging.” To be for ever correcting and prohibiting is exasperating to a child’s temper. We must aim at getting his *will* on our side. We must let him see that happiness comes from right-doing as indeed it truly does. This is not difficult if we have secured his love and trust. He gradually learns, and is convinced that mother and nurse are only so particular because they really desire his good. We cannot in a short work of this kind go fully into the various habits which should be formed in early childhood. Among the most important may be mentioned those of obedience, reverence, kindness, truthfulness, attention, orderliness, courtesy.

Perhaps a word may be said here about the habit of attention. It may seem, at first sight, strange to class it with such things as reverence or truthfulness. But it is a habit which so closely affects our whole life, spiritual, mental, and physical, that the importance of it can hardly be exaggerated. How can we pray, in after life, with any real force or reality if we cannot “attend” for five minutes together? How can we relate accurately anything we have heard, if

we have only half "attended" to what was said? How much shall we miss of the beauty and joy of life if we only look at noble pictures or read great poems with wandering attention? We might go into almost any domain of life, and see what a hampering effect want of attention has, and how much good work it cripples. A schoolmaster said to a boy one day in class, "If you don't attend better to what you are doing, you will find that when you are a man, you can't pray when you want to; you *won't be able to attend then.*" Years afterwards, the boy met a school friend and said "Do you remember what so and so (naming his old master) said about my not attending? Well, it has come quite true. I find I simply *can't* attend when I try to pray." Attention is a difficult habit to form in the case of quick, impatient children. We have very patiently, and with much perseverance, to encourage them to notice carefully the details of anything they are looking at, and then get them to tell us as exactly as possible what they have seen. At first they will have missed much, but by degrees, as we make them look again for what they have missed, they will learn to concentrate their attention on the thing in hand. Of course, with a very young child, attention is only possible where the thing to be observed is intrinsically interesting to the baby mind. A child of two turns rapidly the pages of his picture book without seeing anything much, but, with the help of his mother, even he may be made to look with a little care at something specially interesting, and by slow degrees his faculty of observation may be

trained. We must not expect too much. We shall do the child injury if we expect prolonged attention at an age when it is impossible for him to give it. For the first few years of life he *cannot* attend to one thing for long together. So much for the habit of attention.

In conclusion, let us remember that long before a baby can walk or talk, good or bad habits are being formed. Even the habits of regularity as to feeding and sleep, and other habits, which seem to belong purely to his physical well-being have a mental and moral effect. So closely are the body and mind connected. Doctor Carpenter says "*Regularity* should begin even with infant life, as to times of feeding, repose, etc. The *bodily* habit thus formed greatly helps to shape the *mental* habit at a later period."

CHAPTER XIII

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS TRAINING—III

LET us go on now to consider some practical points in connection with the moral and religious training of children.

With regard to the age at which children should begin to say their prayers, the experience of the best mothers seems to be that as soon as a child can talk so as to make himself plainly understood he may begin to pray. He will already have had some ideas of God put before him. As we saw in a former chapter he will know that God is his Father and will listen to him; that God loves him and is pleased when he does right. The wording of the prayers should be as simple as possible, and the prayers themselves quite short. Probably, at first, the best plan is for the mother to kneel down by the child's side, and to say the prayers for him. By degrees, he learns to say each sentence after her, and then finally, he says them without her help.

It is most important that a reverent attitude of body, and a reverent tone of voice be insisted on. The kneeling upright, the closed eyes, and the clasped hands are a real help to inward devotion. There should be perfect quiet in the room when the prayers are being said. If there are other children there, they

must be made to sit still and wait their turn. Where it is possible, however, it is better that the mother and the child should be alone for prayers. Little sins, that have been committed during the day can be confessed more freely when others are not by; and the mother is able to speak a word in season as occasion demands it. But the “word in season” must be short. Little children simply cannot listen to long lectures; the power of sustained attention is not theirs at this early age. With regard to the matter of reverence, although we have said that an outward attitude of reverence is a help to inward devotion, the real help to the child will come from the mother’s own reverence. If she is really conscious of God’s presence, and if she really feels the solemnity and importance of prayer, her child will learn to feel it too. A man once said “I do not remember anything my mother said to me about my behaviour at prayers, but what did impress me, and what I can never forget, is her own intense reverence as she knelt beside me when I said my childish prayers. *That* impressed me, though her words are all forgotten.”

As soon as a child is capable of learning “by heart,” easy hymns and texts may be taught. Some of the words and phrases in almost any hymn will probably be beyond his understanding and experience; but if the whole hymn or passage represents something which he can, at any rate, partly grasp, or something which he has, in some measure experienced, there is no reason why he should not learn it. For instance, Psalm xxiii, which is one of the earliest generally

learned "by heart," is deservedly a favourite one. It is true that the full beauty and meaning of it cannot be understood by a child—indeed we who are older find ever more and more meaning in it as our experience ripens—but the leading ideas in it can be grasped by a young child. The kind shepherd taking care of the sheep, the fields and the water for comfort and joy—these mean something to him. And we must remember that we cannot be sure how much a child can understand; his spiritual capacity is often greater than we think.

However, we seem to be learning now, from trustworthy sources, that it is not wise to let children learn by heart words that are, as far as we can judge, entirely beyond their comprehension. We used to hear it said "Let them learn the words now; the meaning will come to them later." We were told that it was better to "occupy the ground" before the doubting age began. But the mere learning of *words* is, in no vital way, occupying the ground. Miss Hetty Lee, the Authoress of "New Methods in the Junior Sunday School," gives me permission to quote from a letter of hers. She says: "There is certainly spiritual understanding at that age that must be fed—but it is not fed by *words* but by *ideas* and *experiences*. Words are only intelligible to us when our past or present *experiences* give meaning to them. What we need to do is to give the child the ideas—arouse the feelings—put him in the way of the experiences and then later the words will come to him and be received with joy because they crystallize for him already *vital truths*."

As soon as children can be reasonably expected to sit still they may be taken to Church for a part of the Service. Opinions differ as to the age at which they should be expected to go regularly. The question arises as to whether they should be allowed to go just when they like, or whether they should be made to go as a duty. We want them, as they grow up, to look upon public worship as a duty which they owe to Almighty God; we want them to learn that they go to Church primarily to *give*, and not to *get*—to give praise and thanksgiving and adoration; we want them also to look upon it as a privilege, the neglecting of which harms themselves and others. The question should be not “Do I like to go to Church?” but “Ought I to go?” How to attain this object is the problem. One careful and loving mother, who was very successful in the management of her children used to let them go with her occasionally as a great treat when they were quite little; but she did not allow them to go regularly till they were able to read, and thus able to follow the Service in their Prayer-books. They were then not allowed to miss Church except for ill-health, or some other good reason. A clergyman, of wide experience, who has had a good deal to do with children, tells us that he thinks the average child should begin to go regularly about the age of five.

The thought of Church-going leads us on to the consideration of Sunday generally. There is no doubt that for many children of an older generation, Sunday used to be looked upon with disfavour if not with dread. It was a day of long Services, of dull, hard

reading unrelieved by play. Now, perhaps, we have gone to the other extreme. It is too often a day that differs hardly at all from the other week-days. This is surely a loss to the children. It is quite possible to make the day happy and bright, and yet to keep its sacred character. We want the children to feel that it is the happiest day in the week; that it is, in a special sense "the Lord's day." The books and the toys kept for Sunday use should be the best ones. The pictures to be painted may well be those connected with Bible stories. The old-fashioned Noah's Ark is not to be despised. To keep special things for Sunday helps to mark off the day in the children's minds. Even the best and prettiest clothes which are kept for Sunday use have their value. It is no small thing that little children should learn to connect religion with happiness. Our aim must be, that when they grow up, they shall look upon Sunday as a day of joy, set apart for worship and for rest. They will have to face the fact that as regards what may or may not be done in the way of work or pleasure, no hard-and-fast rules can be laid down. They will have to see that they, and those for whom they are responsible, have opportunities for spiritual and bodily rest and refreshment; and they will have to see also that their conduct is, in no way, a hindrance to others. If they can secure these, then it seems that, within limits, each person must decide for himself how to spend the day.

Many people, who have the care of little children, and who are anxious to teach them thoroughly from the first, find it difficult to know how to set about the

very early religious lessons. To such, may I recommend the book already mentioned?¹ It is full of the most inspiring ideas with regard to the early religious training of little children.

¹ "New Methods in the Junior Sunday School." By Hetty Lee, M.A., published by the National Society.

CHAPTER XIV

REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS

WHAT are we to say about the vexed question of rewards and punishments? We must remember that right doing is not always easy to a child, any more than it is to a grown-up person. The ideal standard to aim at is that we do right for right's sake. But we must not expect too much from little children. They need encouragement in their efforts; and the giving of certain rewards seems quite legitimate in connection with their early training. For instance, if a child, who is naturally thoughtless and noisy, makes a great effort to be quiet and considerate whilst his mother is writing a letter, it is surely right that he should be rewarded by being allowed to "let off steam," and to play some active game as soon as the letter is finished. Or, let us suppose he has been careless with his picture books, torn or dirtied the pages, and his mother is trying to teach him to be careful; she is obliged for a time to keep his best books away from him; then we will suppose that he makes a real effort for several days together to treat his books with respect, she is surely wise if she allows him, as a reward, to have his best book out again. The reward should, as far as possible, be the *natural* result of right conduct.

As regards praise, due consideration must be given to the disposition of the child. A naturally vain child is probably better without much of it. But, I am inclined to think that for most children, a word of commendation given when real effort has been made, has a decidedly good effect. A little child has much to discourage him, and there are many times every day when we are obliged to correct him for some fault or shortcoming. Let us help him all we can in his efforts after goodness. Let us make him feel that somebody notices when he fights bravely against wrong. He will be no worse for the knowledge that his mother or nurse has a good opinion of him.

As to punishments, the fewer there are the better. And it is surprising how few occasions there are for them where the management is wise. "Naughty" children often become "good" in a wonderful way with a change of nurse or governess, and *vice versa*. Where punishments have to be frequently inflicted, there is generally mismanagement. I have seen a class of children attentive and diligent and happy with one mistress, and the same children rude and inattentive and disobedient with another. All of which goes to prove that, to a large extent, children are "naughty" or "good" according to the way they are managed.

Over and over again, in our dealings with them, we need to remind ourselves that children must be given something to do; it is natural to them to be always on the move, and if we do not direct their activities into right channels, then they will get into

mischief. It is cruel to expect them to be what it is not in their nature to be. However, punishments will occasionally be needed wherever there are children. As in the case of rewards, whenever possible the punishment should "fit the offence." For instance, if a child will not play nicely with others, if, for example, he will persist in knocking down his sister's bricks, he must not be allowed to play with others for a time. Or if, at meal times, he behaves badly at table, he must be sent back to the nursery for meals, till he has learned better manners. But sometimes it is impossible for the *natural* punishment to be given. We cannot allow a baby to reap the natural punishment which might result from his crawling up and down stairs against our orders. A bad fall, which would probably follow from his act of disobedience is too dangerous a thing to be risked. If a little bruise were the only injury done, we might well let him find out for himself the dangers of crawling upstairs, and the pain of the bruise would be the best possible punishment.

If a child has been wisely and lovingly trained, the being banished for a time from his mother's presence is generally a sufficient punishment for many of his offences. The old-fashioned plan of sending to bed for a time has its advantages. So also the standing in the corner.

Children differ so much, that what is a severe and even a cruel punishment to one child may scarcely be felt at all by another. It is impossible to lay down any rules and say that such and such a punishment must

follow such and such an offence. The aim of punishment is the reformation of the child; that must never be lost sight of. What we want to make him feel is that we do not willingly cause him suffering, that we would much rather see him glad and happy; but that we *must* help him to conquer his faults. By degrees he will learn the most important lesson that suffering always follows wrong-doing.

We have seen that no rules can be laid down as to punishments; but there are certain rules which apply to the manner of giving them.

(1) Let the punishment quickly follow the offence. A child feels the justice of it much more if the offence he has committed is fresh in his mind.

(2) Try always to get the child to see that his punishment is just.

(3) Never punish in anger; if annoyance is felt, it must be controlled before beginning to punish.

(4) Let the punishment be sufficient to be really felt; but let it be short.

(5) Do not refer to the offence again, when the punishment is over.

(6) Do not talk about faults and punishments more than is absolutely necessary. Keep the child's mind on other things.

(7) Do not allow a governess or nurse to punish for serious offences. The wise ones are always pleased when the mother relieves them of this responsibility.

(8) Do not punish one day for an act which on another day you would allow.

There remains yet the difficult question of corporal

punishment. The very words "corporal punishment" sound so hard and severe when we think of a child in the nursery! But a little slap need not be a very dreadful thing. The question is, is it right to inflict bodily pain at all? Does it ever do the child good? If it does, then we must let no mere fancies of our own keep us from doing it. If it is true, that there are generally two sides to a question, it is certainly true as regards this question of corporal punishment. Many good mothers think that it is always degrading—that it can never do anything but harm. Others, equally good, say that a little slap, severe enough to be felt, administered at the right moment, by the right person, may have a very wholesome effect. I am inclined to think that for some children and for certain offences it is allowable, if it is safeguarded in the following ways: (1) It must be given without the slightest feeling or show of irritation. (2) It must not be given in the presence of other children. (3) The child must know quite clearly what it is being whipped for. (4) If possible, the child must be made to feel that the mother dislikes doing it. I know a little girl of three, whose mother came to the conclusion after careful thought and prayer, that a little whipping was needed. She took the child into a room alone, and explained simply what she was going to do, and why. The whipping was given—just enough to make the little girl feel real pain for a minute. Then all was over. There was no trace of bitterness left behind. It was quite evident that the little culprit felt the justice of it. She sat on her mother's knee, nestling up to her,

and soon, when the fit of crying was over, she looked up most lovingly and said "*Dear mother.*" But the danger of even saying that such punishment *may* be allowable for certain children occasionally, is that young, inexperienced nursemaids may take upon themselves to give it; or again, it is a punishment that is so fatally *easy* to give—why not give a little slap every time the child offends? The fact is, that those people who are tempted to shake or slap a child frequently, are just those who should not do it; while those who dread doing it, and yet do it for the child's good are probably the ones who may be trusted to administer such a punishment.

There is one other aspect with regard to children's punishments, which must be considered. We must be very careful to distinguish between what is wrong-doing in children, and what is merely annoying to ourselves. This is an important matter. We may easily wound a child's tender conscience and lead him astray by teaching him to regard certain acts as sin, which are not sin. For a tiny child to fall on the road and dirty his clothes may be very annoying, but it is not a sin. For a child to break a cup may be equally annoying, but though it may betoken carelessness, it should not be treated as a serious offence. One would think that to strike or scratch a baby brother was not so great an offence as to come into a room with muddy boots, to judge by the way the offences are treated by some who ought to be wiser. It is never safe to judge of the gravity of what is done by the effect it has upon ourselves. We must learn to look at things from the

child's point of view—to be able to distinguish between high animal spirits, and real wrong-doing.

In conclusion, let us again remind ourselves that good managers have very little need to punish at all. Those who find that constant scoldings and punishments are necessary may be very sure that the fault is in themselves. Somehow or other, they have failed in their methods. They must examine themselves seriously as to how and why they have gone wrong; they must pray to Him who alone can understand all their difficulties, for wisdom and guidance; and they must seek advice from the wisest and holiest mothers they can meet with. Sometimes it is a simple thing that is the cause of the mischief. It may be that they have not treated a child hopefully enough. They have let their minds dwell, perhaps, on one act of disobedience, and they have *expected* the child to be disobedient again. Now children are like grown-up people in this, that they are very much what we expect them to be. They act up to our belief in them. Show a child that you believe in him, and expect great things of him, and he will probably not disappoint you. Or it may be that the child does not feel sure that you are always just. This is absolutely fatal. We must not indeed treat all children alike, because no child is quite like any other child, and therefore what is good for one disposition might be bad for another; but we must somehow get them to feel that we are strictly fair and just in our treatment of them. This is not impossible. If we *are* just, by degrees they will find it out. There must be no favouritism felt or

shown. A child who feels that he is misunderstood or unjustly punished is indeed one who deserves our pity. His grief, so bitter and so real to him, should surely move us to tender compassion. Who, that loves little children can read unmoved Coventry Patmore's lines about a father who has been stern to his little son, and who, remembering the child's dead mother, steals up afterwards to comfort him, and finds him asleep with tear-stained cheeks, and all his little treasures by his bed?

"A box of counters and a red-vein'd stone,
A piece of glass abraded by the beach
And six or seven shells,
A bottle with bluebells,
And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful art,
To comfort his sad heart."¹

¹ From "The Toys" by C. Patmore, quoted by Mrs. Soulsby in "Home is Best."

CHAPTER XV

GENERAL REMARKS ON TRAINING

THERE are a few things which it may be well to say in conclusion concerning the training of young children—things which hardly seem to belong to any of the foregoing chapters, but which are, nevertheless, important.

May I first emphasize the point, already hinted at, that children should be left alone to a much larger extent than is generally the case—that they should have growing time and growing room? A little child is apt to think that he is the centre of the universe, and so, of course, he often is in the parents' eyes as well! We would not have the parents less devoted. They cannot love him too much. But it is decidedly bad for the child that he should *know* how important he is. As he grows up, he will find it only too easy to let his thoughts dwell chiefly on self, and that is what we want to save him from. Let us give him plenty of occupation, and then let us train him to amuse and interest himself. Let us, indeed, watch him carefully that we may check the evil tendencies and strengthen the good which are in him; but let him not know that he is being watched. A mother of young children must make them and her husband and household her chief business in life. Whatever outside work she may under-

take, her home is her first concern. Nothing can ever quite make up to the children for the loss of a mother's watchful care during their early years. Do we seem here to be saying in one breath, first, that a young child must be left much alone, and then that he must be carefully watched? Yes; that is just what we must aim at. The child *is* important—so important, that nothing which concerns him is really trivial; and yet, just because this is true, and because we hinder his true development when we make him self-absorbed, we must not let him think that his will is law, and that his every wish is to be gratified.

To speak of a child more than is necessary in his presence is harmful. It is likely either to make him shy and uncomfortable, or conceited. It is surprising how people will talk of a child in his presence. They will relate some bit of naughtiness to a caller perhaps, “*Johnny was a naughty boy this morning; he wouldn’t let his little sister have any of his toys, and he made baby cry, and we could do nothing with him.*” *Johnny* listens to this with all his ears; *his* little doings are always interesting to him. He feels that he is somewhat of a hero; his mind dwells on his naughty acts, and he thinks that he will do them again. Either that, or he is made uncomfortable, and he thinks it unkind of his mother to tell about his misdemeanours to an outsider. To tell *him* at the right moment about his faults, and that in as few words as possible is surely the wiser course. I have more than once seen a schoolmistress call out a child, who was defective in some way, or one who, on the other hand, was specially

pretty and attractive, and point out his defects or attractions to visitors. "Surely," some one will exclaim, "that must have been a singularly stupid or careless mistress." But the sort of thing, of which such an action is a type, is far from being exceptional. People talk about little children in their presence, as if they had no intelligence and no feelings, and it cannot but be bad for them.

Then, too, the sort of conversation on other matters, to which children listen does much harm. They hear neighbours and friends discussed in an uncharitable way; or they hear jokes on sacred subjects; or vulgar talk about courtship and marriage; or they hear death talked about; or cases of cruelty. People say, "Oh, but they can't understand; they are not listening." Are they not listening, though? They listen far more than their elders think; and even if they do not fully understand all that is being said, they often get a general idea of the drift of the conversation, and their characters are, day by day, being influenced for good or evil, by what they hear. Have we not often been astonished by some question a little child has asked—"Mother, why do they put dead people into a hole in the ground?" And we say, "Who can have been talking to him about death?" Then we remember that the arrangements for somebody's funeral were discussed when we thought he was busily engaged with his toys.

Let us pass on to other questions which children will often ask. At some time or other, before many years of life have passed, we are sure to be asked,

“Where do babies come from?” For quite young children the answer that “God sends them” is generally sufficient. If they then ask, “How does He send them?” it seems best to say, “You are not old enough yet to understand.” A pure-minded and reverent woman will find no difficulty in answering questions of this sort. We can always tell children quite simply that there are things beyond their understanding, which can be explained to them when they are older. We must beware, above all things, of ever giving them an answer which is untrue. Untold harm may be done in this way. How are they to believe us at all if they find that we have deceived them once? There is another way of answering such questions, which must be avoided, and that is to laugh at the little questioner, and to make a mystery of the subject. Or again, it is altogether wrong to hush up a child and to say, “Oh, you must not talk of such things; it is very naughty.” What is there “naughty” about it? The child asks these questions in a perfectly pure and innocent way. His views in after life on the subject of bodily purity will be to a large extent the views of those who influenced him in early years. Great reverence is surely due to this purity and innocence of childhood. Indeed, we should do well to remember more often than perhaps we do, that childhood should always be held in reverence. So beautiful and wonderful a thing is a little child fresh from the hands of God.

This is far from saying that we must “spoil” them by letting them do just as they please. To spoil a

thing is not to reverence it. On the contrary, just because we reverence a thing we take care that it shall *not* be spoiled. It is not only not kind, it is cruel to spoil a child. It makes him a misery to himself and to all who come in contact with him. An only child is in great danger of being spoilt unless the parents are willing to take trouble in the matter of training. Spoiling often comes from this want of taking trouble. An indolent person finds it so much easier to let a fault go unchecked than to have a battle with the child. Another cause of spoiling is the mistaken idea that to let a child have its own way means happiness for him. We hear it said "My child will only be young once; I want him to be happy now; he will have plenty of sorrow later." Now, a little child often does not know what makes for happiness; he, of course, thinks he does, but he does not; and to gratify his every whim does not really make him happy. It is the greatest possible mistake to imagine that unlimited licence means happiness. Children are really happier when they are under discipline, if that discipline is loving and firm.

Is childhood, after all, the happiest time of life? Probably not, though it is impossible to say with certainty. The sorrows which seem so trivial to us are so great and often so hopeless to a child. A broken doll may be a real calamity. "Sorrow to the old is sorrow; to the young it is despair." It is poor comfort to a child to be told, "Ah, you will have something to cry for when you are older; don't waste your tears on a doll." There are people so wanting in imagination

and sympathy that they will even laugh at a child's sorrows because to grown-up eyes they seem so ridiculously small. To laugh at a child hardly ever does good in any case; but to laugh when he is in trouble is cruel—to laugh *with* him in his fun and joy is a very different thing. Laughter betokens happiness, and we cannot have too much of that. Sarcasm, too, towards children is always out of place.

As this is a chapter of a somewhat miscellaneous character, we must be pardoned if we jump rather suddenly from one train of thought to another.

Let us now consider the subject of truthfulness in children. Many children, from the age of about three, live so much in a world of imagination that they often seem to be untruthful when they are not. They come in, perhaps, from a walk, and relate some adventure which has not really taken place according to our prosaic ideas, but which has been real enough to them. "I saw some beautiful fairies so small and so sweet, all dancing in a ring in the field when I was out, and they nodded and waved to me as I passed. Oh, they were so very, very pretty." Should one call this a lie, and punish for it? Surely not. And yet I have known a little boy severely punished for just such a tale as this. These highly imaginative children need, of course, careful watching, or their sense of truth may be obscured; but I do not think there is as much danger as is often supposed in this direction, if the grown-up members of the family are themselves truthful people. It is not really difficult to teach a child the difference between a lie and his "pretending"; it

is one he is quite able to appreciate even though his "pretendings" may be intensely real to him for the time being. What we must try to make him understand is that a lie is that which is meant to deceive; if we can do that, he will not think later on that he is being truthful if, when his mother praises him for some good deed which he has not done, he remains silent, thereby letting her think that he deserves her praise.

Probably the three chief causes of untruthfulness in children are fear, love of praise, and the being distrusted. If a child is suddenly asked in a stern voice if he has done something naughty he will be tempted to deny that he has, for fear of the consequences. Or he will say that he has done some good deed which he has not, for the sake of gaining the good opinion of those in authority. Or again, if he feels that he is not trusted, he naturally thinks that it does not much matter whether he speaks the truth or not. All such questions as "Are you sure?" should be avoided. Children should feel that their simple word is enough. They should feel that of course we expect them always to be truthful, and that even if they have deceived us once, we do not expect them to do so again now that they are "growing bigger and understand better what truth is."

One of the most important lessons we have to teach in the nursery is that of self-control. The want of it may bring disaster into the life later on. To teach a child to stop crying when it is hurt may seem a little thing, but the effect on his character is not little. To

teach a child not to eat sweets except at meal times may also seem unimportant, but the gratifying of the senses whenever desire is felt will lead to serious sins in later life. If we can teach a child to say "no" to himself when he wants to do something, we have taught him that which will be of value to him all his life. If a baby cries lustily for some forbidden thing, we distract his thoughts from the coveted object by giving him something else to think about, and so stop the crying. As he grows older he has to learn to do for himself what we have hitherto done for him. For instance, he is feeling anger against a companion for some unkind word that has been said. We want to help him to control the anger, and we tell him, "Try, with all your might, to think of something else, think about that big dog and the dear little puppies we saw yesterday; wasn't the dog good to the little things?" and so on. Teach him to do this for himself—to *make himself* think of things in obedience to his will. This is slow work, and can only be done very gradually. At first we must do it for him; we shall change his thoughts without his being conscious that we are doing so. Every little act of self-control should be encouraged. "Mother is so pleased that you stopped making a noise because baby was asleep. She saw you just beginning to be noisy, and then you remembered. It is so nice that you can *make yourself* do things now."

Whenever it is possible, it should be arranged that young children should not be all day long with one person. Both for their own sakes and for their rulers'

it is better that there should be a change. They are very tiring little people to be with always, especially to a sympathetic person. Each house, of course, must have its own arrangements. In many of the best managed homes the plan is that the mother has the children for a good part of the morning, whilst the nurse is busy with the nurseries, baby's washing, etc., and the nurse takes her turn with them in the afternoon. Then the mother has them again for a short time before they go to bed, whilst preparations for the night are being made.

Let us conclude this chapter by suggesting that a little more respect for elders should be taught to the rising generation. It is an old-fashioned doctrine, I know, but not to be set aside solely for that reason. We hear so much nowadays of the importance of not crushing a child's personality in any way, that we sometimes go to the other extreme, and allow him to monopolize the conversation and to interrupt his elders in a way which is, to put it mildly, unbecoming. That we are learning to reverence childhood more, is no reason why we should allow our little ones to grow up with bad manners, and with self-assertive ways. Courtesy, and thoughtfulness for others, should be always in fashion. Why should not children still be taught to stand up when visitors come into the room; to get up and open the door for their mother; to stand aside and let the grown-ups go out of a room first? They are not less happy because they are polite. Good manners are such a charm, and make such a tremendous difference in

life, that it is not fair to the children to let them grow up untrained in this respect. It is delightful to see, as we do in some homes, how the little boys are taught to show politeness to their sisters—how they are taught to protect and care for them.

In conclusion we will remind ourselves that no work which we do for little children is lost. They sorely tax our patience at times, and we see so little result for all our labours; but our efforts do tell; they are not really without effect. Slowly but surely the influences around them are helping to mould their characters. And are they not worth all our labours? What would the world be like without them?

“Of such is the kingdom of heaven.
No glory that ever was shed
From the crowning star of the seven
That crown the north world’s head,

No word that ever was spoken
Of human or godlike tongue,
Gave ever such godlike token
Since human harps were strung.

No sign that ever was given
To faithful or faithless eyes,
Showed ever beyond clouds riven
So clear a Paradise.

Earth’s creeds may be seventy times seven
And blood have defiled each creed:
If of such be the kingdom of heaven,
It must be heaven indeed.”

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